



**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
OF TEXAS**

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

**JOHN L. HILL
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

July 20, 1977

Honorable C. C. Nolen
President
North Texas State University
Denton, Texas 76203

Open Records Decision No. 167

Re: Whether student evaluations of faculty members are public under the Open Records Act.

Dear Mr. Nolen:

You have requested our decision regarding whether student evaluations of faculty members are public under the Open Records Act, article 6252-17a, V.T.C.S.

You explain that the History Department of North Texas State University requests students anonymously to rate their instructors on a scale of one to five in 18 selected areas, such as "ability to explain," "fairness in grading," and "attitude toward students." The results are compiled as a computer printout as to each individual instructor. Each professor receives a copy of his own printout, and a copy is placed in his personnel file, but the results are not made available to the public. A professor in the History Department has now requested a copy of the computer printout for each instructor in the Department. You contend that such records are excepted from disclosure by section 3(a)(2) of the Open Records Act, which excepts

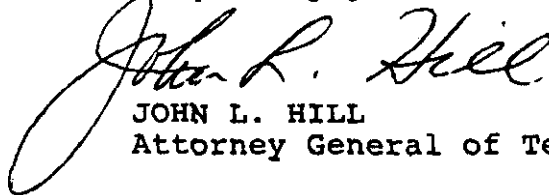
information in personnel files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. . . .

In Open Records Decision No. 34 (1974), we considered whether student evaluations of faculty members were required to be disclosed. The anonymous printed forms at issue there contained questions similar to those about which you inquire. Although, we based our conclusion in that decision partially upon the failure of the University to request our advice within ten days of the initial request, we also found that

disclosure of the results of the student evaluations would not constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. But see Open Records Decision No. 90 (1975).

We believe that the result is the same in the present instance. The documents being sought consist of computer printouts composed of information which is entirely statistical. Individualized, student-initiated comments are not part of the printouts. In our view, the public, as well as the other faculty members, has a significant interest in knowing student opinion regarding their instructors' performance at a state-supported institution. We believe also that disclosure of this information cannot be deemed to constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. It is our decision therefore that the results of this student evaluation of faculty members you have submitted to us are public under the Open Records Act and should be disclosed.

Very truly yours,



JOHN L. HILL
Attorney General of Texas

APPROVED:



DAVID M. KENDALL, First Assistant



C. ROBERT HEATH, Chairman
Opinion Committee

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